



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Half Moon Bay, California	Accident Number:	WPR09CA103
Date & Time:	January 29, 2009, 15:00 Local	Registration:	N2805E
Aircraft:	Aeronca 7BC	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:	Fuel exhaustion	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

While returning from an island sightseeing flight about 25 miles into the Pacific Ocean, the pilot of the rented vintage airplane heard what he thought was a change in engine sound. About five minutes later, while cruising at about 2,400 rpm, with oil pressure and oil temperature indicating normal, the engine suddenly stopped producing power. Although the wood propeller continued to windmill until the airplane was slowed to about 60 miles per hour, the pilot could not get the engine restarted and ultimately ditched in the ocean. The duration of the flight was 1.6 hours and the pilot reported that the 13-gallon fuel tank appeared full prior to engine start. A subsequent records review revealed that the airplane had been flown for .6 of an hour on the previous day, and had not subsequently been refueled. According to the certified flight instructor, who checked the pilot out in the airplane, the pilot was informed that due to its limited fuel quantity, when fully fueled, the airplane needed to be back at the airport two hours after departure. The total time logged since the last refueling was 2.2 hours, and the flight to the island included an outbound climb to about 5,000 feet.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A total loss of engine power due to fuel exhaustion as a result of the pilot's failure to perform an accurate visual fuel quantity check prior to initiating the flight.

Findings

Aircraft	Fuel - Inadequate inspection
Personnel issues	Fuel planning - Pilot
Aircraft	Fuel - Fluid level

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute-cruise	Fuel exhaustion (Defining event)
Enroute-cruise	Loss of engine power (total)
Landing	Ditching

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	49, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 4, 2005
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 20, 2008
Flight Time:	337 hours (Total, all aircraft), 27 hours (Total, this make and model), 3 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aeronca	Registration:	N2805E
Model/Series:	7BC	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7AC-6388
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	C85F
Registered Owner:	Amelia Reid Aviation LLC	Rated Power:	85 Horsepower
Operator:	AeroDynamic Aviation	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	San Jose, CA (KRHV)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	San Jose, CA (KRHV)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:16 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	37.518333,-122.683334(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Anderson, Orrin
Additional Participating Persons:	Roger Zimmerman; Federal Aviation Administration; Oakland, CA
Original Publish Date:	May 6, 2009
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=73290

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